

City of Corunna
Regular Council Meeting
Monday, June 6, 2005

Present: Corey, Johnson, Mehigh, Runyan, Sanderson, Spring, Wagner.

Absent: None.

Guests: Joe Sawyer, City Manager; Judy Horton; Bob & Kietha Ockerman; Diane Johnson; Tim Crawford, Superintendent of Public Works; Shirley Sanderson; Clark Long; Bill Striggow; Bob Buschman; Gary Schooley; Jack Boursmith; Jack Striggow; Bob & Sharon Morehouse; Keith Johnson; Larry Friess; Joe DeCaire; Tom Martin; Helen Granger, The Independent; Sam Burwell; Nina Hall; Cheryll Warren, The Argus Press; Jennifer Eashoo; and other concerned citizens.

The meeting was called to order in the City Council Chambers by Mayor Corey at 7:00 p.m.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS REGULAR MEETING: Johnson moved, Sanderson seconded to approve the previous regular meeting minutes dated May 16, 2005 as presented.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Wagner, Johnson, Sanderson, Runyan, Spring, Mehigh.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS SPECIAL MEETING: Runyan moved, Mehigh seconded to approve the previous special meeting minutes dated May 27, 2005 as presented.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Sanderson, Mehigh, Spring, Wagner, Runyan.

No: None.

Abstain: Johnson.

Motion CARRIED

AGENDA APPROVAL: Runyan moved, Johnson seconded to approve the agenda with the addition of Item No. 5) Consider Termination of Mayoral Designee to DDA.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Spring, Runyan, Mehigh, Wagner, Johnson, Sanderson.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

APPROVAL OF VENDOR DISBURSEMENTS: Runyan moved, Johnson seconded to approve the vendor disbursements as presented with the addition of vendor number 2372 in the amount of \$158.95, which was removed from the May 2, 2005 meeting.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Runyan, Wagner, Spring, Sanderson, Mehigh, Johnson.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

CALL TO AUDIENCE: Keith Johnson, 211 Hastings Street, advised at the last city council

meeting comments from an individual on this government body were made about a group of citizens that had left the meeting as being negative people of this community or something to that effect. He further advised he has stated this before and he thinks it now needs to be repeated more than ever that the council meeting is a public forum and is a designated meeting by charter for the council to conduct the business of the city and for the public to attend and voice their opinions or concerns on any issue if they so desire. This council serves only as an extension of the citizenry and nothing more or nothing less and if any of the councilpersons sitting here do not believe that is the purpose of this forum then they better take a refresher course in Government 101 if they fail to remember what was taught. He also advised this labeled group of people included past mayors, past council people, and people who sit on boards and commissions that the council appointed them to serve on. Their collective service and time in this community nears well over 100 years and those citizens have the right by charter to come to this forum and voice their concerns without being labeled anything less than concerned citizens. Mr. Johnson explained the people simply voiced their concerns over the wisdom of an issue that differed from the elected officials that represent them. A comment was also made about the citizenry attendance records of past meetings, which is a pre-requisite for nothing and is another chapter in Government 101. He further explained this council should have in fact thanked the people for coming and voicing their concerns. He also explained about a year ago this council voted to go to Mackinaw Island to a seminar, which he believed was sponsored by the Michigan Municipal League and the council appeared enthusiastic. One of the sessions was about how to communicate with the public and he wondered if anything was learned from that session or if anyone attended that session. Mr. Johnson stated the council could call him what they want to but for those people who were labeled as negative and on behalf of the ones who do not believe in the purpose of local government he wanted to apologize to the people for that remark. He believes the people in that group are the very heart and sole of what is decent and right about democracy. He further stated sometimes he wonders how we as a nation can encourage democracy with other nations when on the local level the guidelines and principles are not followed that were set forth by our founding fathers; a government of the people, by the people and for the people.

Bob Buschman, W. Corunna Avenue, agreed with Mr. Johnson and advised he was also appalled by the comments made by certain members of this council and as Mr. Johnson stated, this is a public forum and the people have the right to come here anytime the people feel that it may be necessary. Mr. Buschman further advised not only does the city charter give the people that right but the United States Constitution gives people the Freedom of Speech and that is something that cannot be taken away. The comments made about the negativity of the public as expressed recently were totally out of bounds and as Mr. Johnson stated there are certain members of this very council who sat in the audience prior to their election and expressed themselves in the same negative manner but it seems when the shoe is on the other foot, this council or certain members seem to place the blame outward and are not willing to take that criticism. Mr. Buschman also advised most of the people in this room have been raised to accept the responsibility for their actions whether good or bad. It was only a year ago that he and other residents spoke up against some of these same subjects and there was a councilperson that spoke against actions taken by the majority but that councilperson was chastised for having the gall to speak or even question others on the council and that same person is no longer seated on the council and no one

knows why. Mr. Buschman stated other comments were made that people only come to a meeting when they have a complaint and that is a slap in the face to the citizens of this city. The citizens have elected the council to represent them and the citizens as well as the council prior to election have the option to attend a meeting and he is aware that there are certain members of this very council and prior to their appointment or election that were never heard from. Mr. Buschman asked if anyone on the council could stand up and state they attended every council session since they have been a resident of the city. The citizens of this city elected the council to conduct the routine business of the city and citizen input is not needed a majority of the time until a situation presents itself and he felt comments should be made whether they are positive or negative. He advised if his comments cause him to be removed from the boards and commissions he serves on at the pleasure of this council then so be it. There have been several recent resignations from city boards and commissions from people who are long standing citizens and asked if it could be due to the negative comments from the city council towards the citizens. He further advised there might be more citizens who may resign based on the information he knew about. He asked if the city could survive without its citizens and volunteers who give their free time to a system of disinterest of this city. He also advised maybe it is time for the council to take a look at themselves in the mirror and ask these questions: Am I making the city a better place through my personal actions? Am I representing the citizens of this city? Do I have a personal agenda? or Am I the individual who is causing the disruption among the citizens and council? Mr. Buschman stated if council can answer yes to more than two of the questions then maybe it is time to step aside.

Sam Burwell, 314 W. Mack Street, stated comments that city council members make outside of this room are still being made as city council people and the council needs to remember that. Comments should be made with just an iota of knowledge of what is being talked about because people know who the council people are and that person is speaking for the council whether you like it or not or whether you believe it to be true or not.

Bill Striggow stated Keith Johnson is a personal friend of his and there are members of the council who are personal friends and he hates to see this wedge.

Joe DeCaire, 4726 E. M-21, stated he was before council as a representative of the parks and recreation commission to ask the city council if there was a possible chance that a special meeting could be set up between the commission and the city council on June 18 in the community center or on June 22 at 6:30 p.m. in the Olmsted Room to discuss the idea of allowing alcohol in the community center. Mayor Corey advised he was not available on June 18 or June 22. He asked council if they could meet one of those two dates. A decision was made to meet on June 22, 2005 at 6:30 p.m. in the Olmsted Room.

Jack Striggow stated Keith Johnson has spent more time than anyone in this group and booze in the casino in the park is not needed.

CONSIDER APPOINTING AUTHORIZING OFFICIAL TO REQUEST TRUNKLINE

CLOSURE PERMITS: Wagner moved, Sanderson seconded to appoint Shelley Spencer as the authorizing official to request trunkline closure permits.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Mehigh, Spring, Runyan, Johnson, Sanderson, Wagner.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

CONSIDER TABLING 7:15 P.M. PUBLIC HEARING FOR IFT ABATEMENT FOR

MACHINE TOOL & GEAR: Runyan moved, Wagner seconded to remove the 7:15 p.m. public hearing for IFT Abatement for Machine Tool & Gear and re-notice for a future date.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Johnson, Sanderson, Wagner, Mehigh, Runyan, Spring.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

CONSIDER ENGINEERING PROPOSAL FOR BRADY STREET BOAT LAUNCH: Johnson

moved, Runyan seconded to accept the engineering proposal for the Brady Street Boat Launch as presented by Capital Consultants.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Wagner, Johnson, Sanderson, Runyan, Spring, Mehigh.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

CONSIDER ENGINEERING PROPOSAL FOR FERRY STREET PUMP STATION: Wagner

moved, Johnson seconded to accept the engineering proposal for the Ferry Street Pump Station as presented by Capital Consultants.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Spring, Runyan, Mehigh, Wagner, Johnson, Sanderson.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

CONSIDER TERMINATION OF MAYORAL DESIGNEE TO DDA: Johnson moved, Runyan

seconded to terminate the mayoral designee to DDA effective immediately with deep appreciation to Joe Sawyer for a job well done.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Runyan, Wagner, Spring, Sanderson, Mehigh, Johnson.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

CALL TO AUDIENCE: Gary Schooley, 301 Ferry Street, advised whatever council says whether it is inside or outside of this building they have to remember that this is a small town and if something is said it gets right out there so be careful what you say because it does involve this town and it is hurting it. The city is losing volunteers so just be a little bit more compassionate.

Bob Buschman stated there is a saying in the military that it is time for an attitude adjustment and maybe the same could be said for this council. Take time to look around, listen to what the people are saying, interpret what the people are saying and react in a positive manner to those who elected you. He further stated the citizens deserve the best

they can get so please give them your best.

Jack Striggow asked how many of the council attended a Michigan Municipal League conference other than Mackinaw Island. Four members of the council raised their hands.

Sharon Morehouse stated it has been established that alcohol causes more sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancies, and family abuse than any other drug.

Bob Morehouse stated it sounds like the council is trying to separate the community center from McCurdy Park but to his knowledge he does not believe the community center property is separate from the park. He believes the original writing was not to allow alcoholic beverages in the park so he does know how the community center can be pulled out of McCurdy Park since it is in the park. Mayor Corey stated discussion about allowing alcohol in the community center was put out for public input and nothing has been done to allow it but the council is looking at an ordinance that would address this.

Judy Horton stated she was on the parks and recreation commission and the commission would like to hear the actual reasons why people do not want alcohol in the community center. This is why the commission wanted the council to have a public hearing so the commission can hear why. Mayor Corey advised the will does allow council to do this and he was not saying it was the proper thing to do but the will states the common council could do what they deem proper so it is not against the will. The newspapers generalized that the city council is going to allow alcohol in McCurdy Park when in fact there is only discussion about allowing alcohol in the community center under certain guidelines.

Joe DeCaire stated on June 22 the parks and recreation commission would be discussing allowing alcohol in the community center for private events and the meeting is open to the public. Mayor Corey encouraged the public to attend this meeting to express their opinions because he thought it was important for the parks and recreation commission to understand how the public feels about this as well.

Sam Burwell stated he read about this subject in the newspaper and he thought the article was clear that alcohol would only be allowed in the community center and not the whole park. He further stated he was against this idea because of the liability and insurance problems. If someone gets hurt or killed because someone got drunk at the community center, the city might think it will be sheltered against lawsuits by making the rental parties have insurance but the family of that person will go after everyone and whether or not the people win is a moot point because it will cost the city money to defend itself to prove that the city is not liable. He also stated he does not know why alcohol is needed because it involves such a small amount of money. The community center is rented so much of the time that there are so few weekends that it is not rented and he does not know what the purpose is. Mr. Burwell advised his daughter had her wedding reception there and the community center is a wonderful facility. People can have a great time without alcohol and if people have to have alcohol then let them go someplace else that already has a license and insurance in place. He further advised this would cost the city more money in the long run than it will ever make in the few weekends that it will be rented.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION: Councilperson Mehigh advised he had nothing to discuss.

Councilperson Spring stated he thought the council had talked about doing a pre-public hearing on allowing alcohol in the community center. Mr. Sawyer advised yes, there was discussion about this at the last meeting and the reason any type of public hearing was postponed was to draft ordinance language for a public hearing. The reason for a public hearing is to discuss specific proposed language, which the city does not have. He further advised the city attorney has looked over the will and since this issue was addressed 10 or 12 years ago, he has dug all of his former information out. The council discussed holding a pre-hearing so countless hours of staff time is not spent on putting together an ordinance if council decides not to go in that direction anyway. Mr. Sawyer asked if the joint council and parks and recreation commission on this issue should be posted as a public hearing. Council agreed so the joint meeting will be posted as a public hearing.

Councilperson Runyan advised he had nothing to discuss.

Councilperson Johnson apologized for not thanking the residents for attending the meeting and advised the public's comments do mean a lot. She thanked everyone for coming out tonight. She advised council is taking a bad rap on allowing alcohol in the park after being asked by the parks and recreation commission to put it on an agenda for discussion. The council did what it was asked to do and she has pros and cons on the issue and all of the public comments are helping her to decide. She also advised Tim Gibson, who is a member of the Corunna-Caledonia Fire Department, won the Mr. Owosso contest.

Councilperson Wagner advised he had nothing to discuss.

Councilperson Sanderson advised he knew everyone knew he was the one who got rapped tonight and as Mr. Schooley stated everyone needs to work together. He offered an apology to anybody he offended and if people choose to accept it, that is fine and if not, that is fine and dandy too.

Mayor Corey congratulated Tim Gibson who did a great job. The candidates raised over \$52,000, which is remarkable plus the firefighters came through once again as they always do. Mayor Corey stated he also wanted to thank the individuals who show up because the meetings do not often get a lot of people here and he appreciates the people for taking their time to express their comments whether they agree with the council or not. He further stated the whole purpose of the alcohol issue is to generate discussion and the comments made are valuable. He is hopeful that the issue will be settled at the next parks and recreation meeting because he does think there is any point in spending a lot of time on an

ordinance if the council is not looking towards going there. He also stated he appreciates the fact that the parks and recreation commission is looking at ways to generate money and he did not think this was a bad suggestion even if it does not go through.

ADJOURN: Runyan moved, Wagner seconded to adjourn.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Sanderson, Mehig, Johnson, Spring, Wagner, Runyan.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED Time was 7:45 p.m.

STEVE COREY, MAYOR

YVONNE F. LONG, CITY CLERK